

Dear Leadership Forum Participant:

Thank you for your participation in the recent Child Care Bureau Leadership Forum on Early Literacy in Child Care Settings. Literacy unlocks doors to achievement and if we are to close the achievement gap in our nation's schools, we must close the early childhood education gap in our communities. As President Bush said recently in announcing his administration's focus on improving school success, "reading is the new civil right."

Child care providers partner with millions of parents in raising their children and preparing them for kindergarten. Quality child care provides a solid foundation of social, emotional, physical and cognitive development for learning. Quality child care focused on developing young children's early literacy can help start children on a positive trajectory for life.

The Child Care Bureau's Leadership Forum highlighted specific curricula, provider training and support strategies, and activities for parents and communities that can enhance children's emerging literacy from birth. Dr. Susan Landry's keynote provided a framework for outcomes based teacher training. Panelists from community initiatives highlighted a range of literacy efforts undertaken by states and local communities. Participants actively discussed the opportunities and challenges for policy makers and administrators at all levels, as well as programs, foundations, and parents in ensuring that children in child care are surrounded by early literacy experiences.

The enclosed materials include summaries of the Forum proceedings, a listing of national and state literacy resources, and initiatives funded by the federal government to support literacy. An outline of the Administration's Good Start, Grow Smart initiative is also included. Quality child care supports children's emerging literacy, both in care and at home, which can help every child have an equal place at the education starting line.

Shannon Christian

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Shannon Christian", with a stylized, flowing script.

Assistant Commissioner, ACYF Child Care Bureau